



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

June 28, 1999

H.R. 1691 **Religious Liberty Protection Act of 1999**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on June 23, 1999

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 1691 would have no significant impact on the federal budget because this bill would primarily address state actions. Because enactment of H.R. 1691 would not affect direct spending or receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

Under current law, a state or local government may infringe upon a person's exercise of religion as long as that action bears a rational relationship to the government's interest. H.R. 1691 would preclude, under certain circumstances, any infringement on a person's exercise of religion unless the state or local government could show that it furthered a compelling interest by the least restrictive means.

H.R. 1691 would allow the federal government to sue state and local governments to enforce compliance with provisions of the bill. CBO expects that any costs associated with this authority would be insignificant. Such federal costs, if any, would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Section 4 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act excludes from the application of that act any legislative provisions that enforce the constitutional rights of individuals. CBO has determined that H.R. 1691 fits within that exclusion.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Susanne S. Mehlman. This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.